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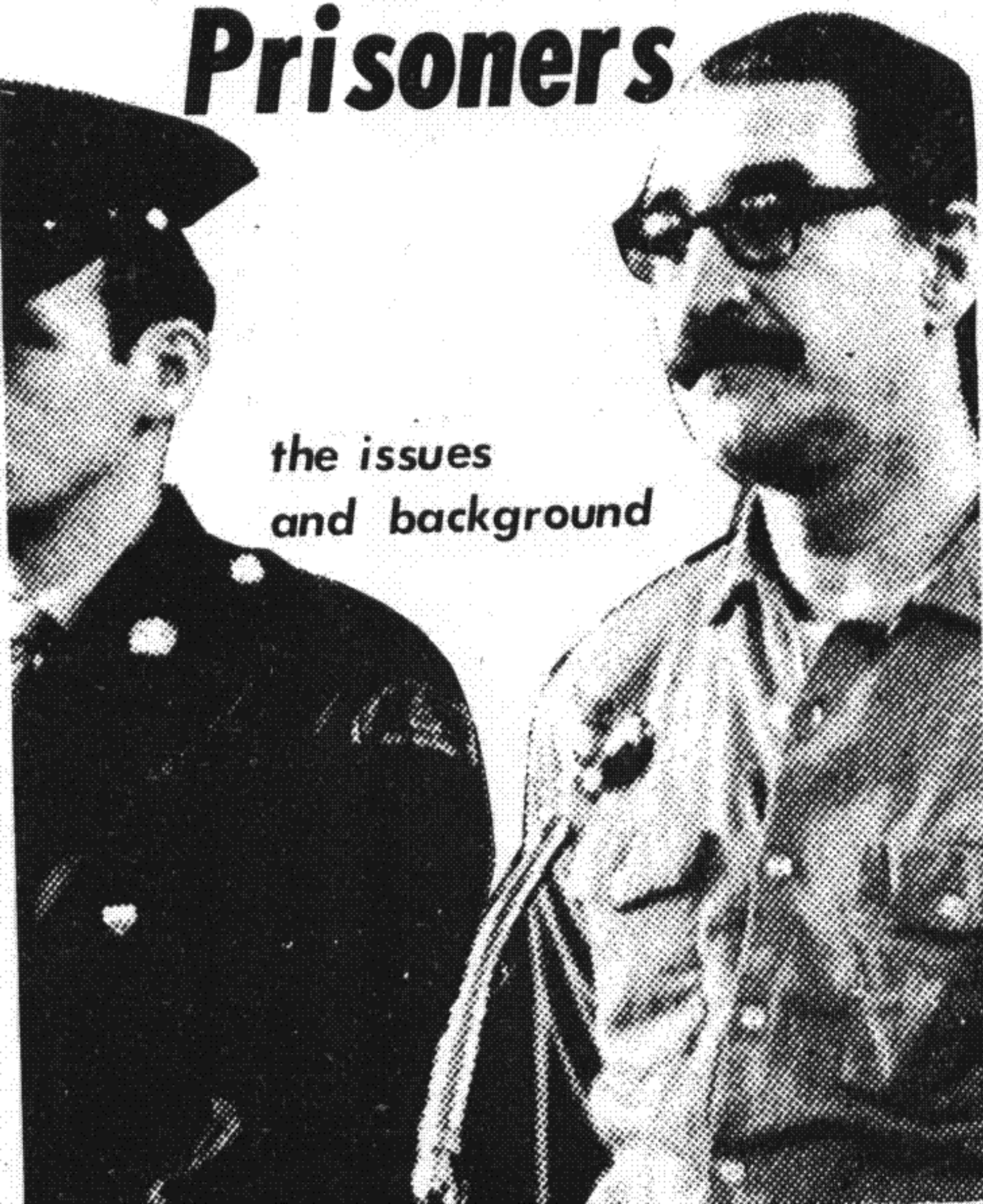
Free Quebec Political Prisoners



the issues and background

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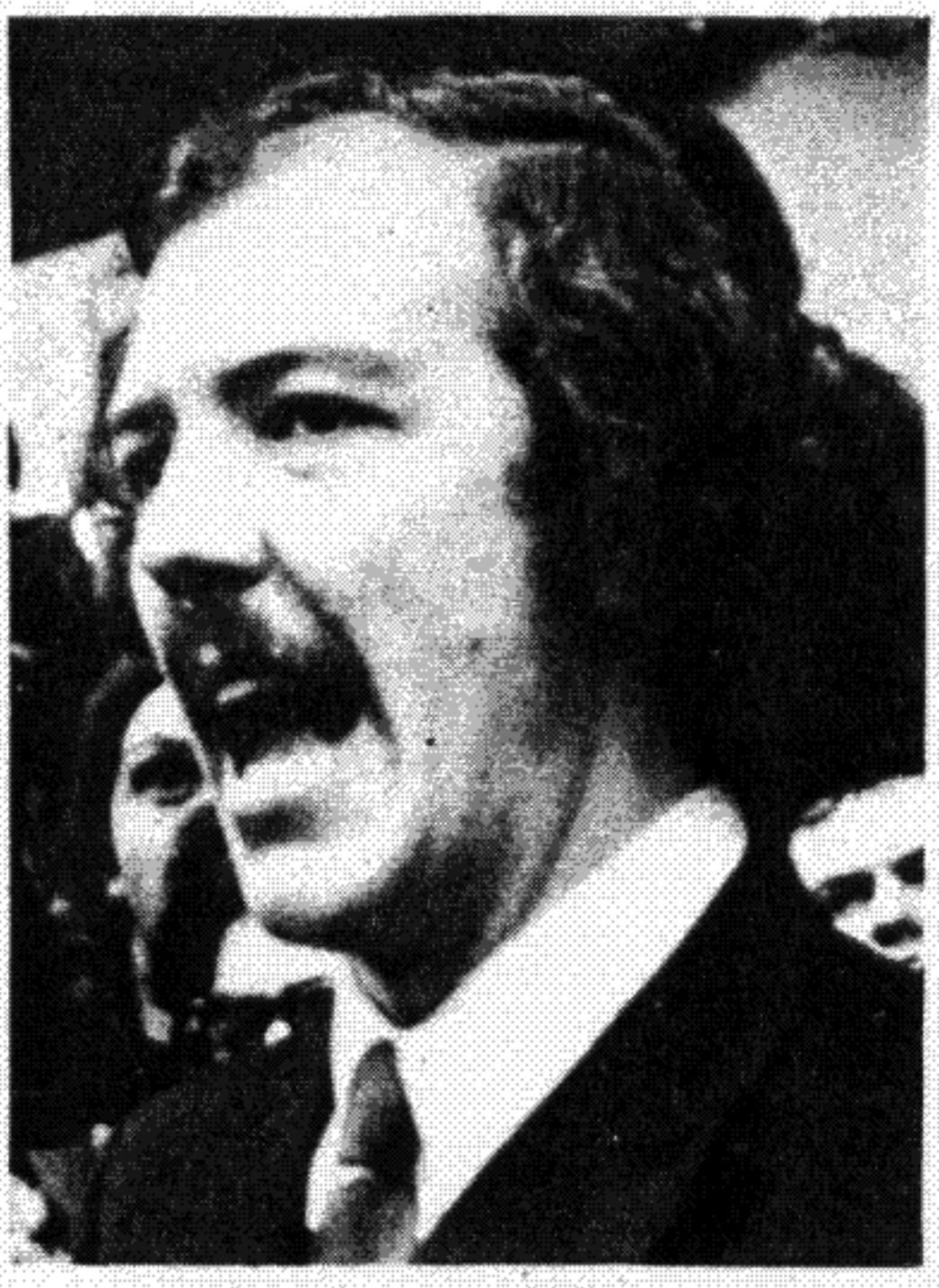
Quebec trials attempt to silence nationalists

"The only reason for bringing these charges is to keep us guys in prison," Jacques Larue-Langlois told the judge in a Montreal police court November 5. "How can you charge guys who have been in prison, or organized unions, with conspiracy to overthrow the government, and not be ashamed?"

Larue-Langlois is one of 13 people charged with seditious conspiracy to overthrow the governments of Canada and Quebec by force. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison.

The 13 are among more than 50 political prisoners held and charged under the War Measures Act in Quebec. Most have been charged with membership in the now-outlawed Front de Libération du Quebec between January 1, 1968 and October 16, 1970.



Robert Lemieux, defense lawyer charged with seditious conspiracy.

Two persons have been charged with "advocating the aims" of the FLQ. If convicted, they could be jailed five years.

The Montreal political trials indicate clearly that the federal and Quebec governments, far from dropping their phony theory of an "insurrectionary plot" which they used to justify invoking the War Measures Act, are trying to sustain it through these charges.

Through drawn-out legal proceedings and possibly long jail sentences, Trudeau and Bourassa hope to remove a significant section of their most radical nationalist and left opposition, while at the same time maintain the witch-hunt atmosphere which will allow them to introduce a series of more permanent repressive measures.

Those accused of "seditious conspiracy" include some of the leading left wing spokesmen in the Québécois nationalist movement. There is Michel Chartrand, president of the Montreal Central Council of the Confederation of National Trade Unions. A printer by trade — he owns and operates his own firm, the first CNTU printers' local — Chartrand has been active in the labor and nationalist movement since the 1930s.

He was an organizer for the anti-conscription Bloc Populaire during the war. In the 1950s, he was leader of the Parti Social Démocratique, Quebec arm of the CCF. From 1963 to 1965, he was president of the Parti Socialiste du Québec, the first attempt to establish an

independent equivalent of the New Democratic Party in Quebec.

Today Chartrand is the unofficial leader of a left tendency within the CNTU that advocates a commitment of the labor federation to partisan political action. In 1968 he was instrumental in getting the CNTU's Montreal council to endorse the New Democratic Party; and he was a prime initiator of the Front d'Action Politique (FRAP), the labor-based party that contested the recent Montreal civic election.

There is nothing "clandestine" about Michel Chartrand and his politics; on the contrary, the Establishment wishes it could silence him. Is this the purpose of 'hese trials?

Other leading defendants are Pierre /allières and Charles Gagnon, for the past four years Quebec's best-known political prisoners. Their history in the Quebec left goes back to the early 1960s — as co-editors for a short while of Cité Libre, the distinguished monthly journal established by Pierre Elliot Trudeau and Gérard Pelletier; founding editors of Révolution Quebecoise, collaborators of Parti Pris, militants in a variety of nationalist movements.

In September 1966, Vallières and Gagnon were arrested at the United Nations building in New York where they were on a hunger strike to protest charges of manslaughter pending against them in Montreal in connection with a bombing death. There followed years of imprisonment and trials which are detailed in an article elsewhere in this pamphlet.

Vallières' political views, far from clandestine, are detailed in his autobiography, Nègres Blancs d'Amerique (White Niggers of America), soon to be published in English. This book is banned in Quebec, and Vallières faces sedition charges based on its contents.

Also indicted for "seditious conspiracy" are Robert Lemieux and Jacques Larue-Langlois. Lemieux was lawyer for Vallières and Gagnon and aided the defense of many political prisoners in recent years. Larue-Langlois, a former CBC producer headed the Vallières-Gagnon defense committee and previous to that was a leader in the nuclear disarmament movement.

Among the women charged with FLQ membership is Andrée Ferretti, a former vice-president of the Rassemblement pour l'Indépendance Nationale (RIN), a mass independentist party which preceded the formation of the Parti Quebecois.

All those charged have been refused bail and remanded in custody to January, 1971.

Appearing in an improvised court at police headquarters November 5, the leading defendants ridiculed the charge that they had plotted since January 1968 to overthrow the government. Pierre Vallières noted that for most of that time he and Charles Gagnon had been in prison, on charges of inciting through their writings the death of a woman killed by a bomb in a strike-bound factory. Gagnon, who had been acquitted, said the current charges didn't surprise him since "I have already been accused of having incited a bomb to explode."

Michel Chartrand said it was "an error" to accuse him of having conspired" since 1968. "I have conspired since 1938, when I began to struggle against the rouges of Taschereau and the bleus of Duplessis! I have fought the governments in all the third parties except Social Credit.

"But where is it that I have been seditious? When I contested the labor code? When I supported the workers of Murdochville and Asbestos? When I denounced the lower court judges who followed to the letter the orders of Duplessis?"

Robert Lemieux denounced the trials as "this shameful game, this nameless buffoonery, this extraordinary farce!" The charges should be quashed, he said, as contrary to human and legal rights. "I want to know of what act, of what omission I am accused. . .If you reject the motion you should be ashamed of yourself," he told the judge.

Lemieux has since smuggled out of prison a 32-page letter to the Quebec Bar and prominent personalities including Trudeau and Bourassa, demanding release from jail, access to his files (seized by police), and vigorous action by the Bar to stop the official harassment of his efforts to defend political prisoners. As to the charge that he engaged in seditious conspiracy while he was defending political prisoners, he says, "this idiotic charge should shake and scandalize everyone

concerned with the administration of justice, and the Bar in the first place."

The Montreal trials shift the focal point of the campaign against the repressive laws, the War Measures Act and its successor, to a vigorous struggle to defend these political prisoners. A united campaign must be waged across the country for the dropping of these scandalous frame-up charges. For the governments concerned, the trials are the key expression of their determination to block the aspirations of the Quebecois nationalist movement. They mark a new stage in Trudeau's campaign to intimidate the mass independentist movement and harass and repress its leadership.

The trials indicate the real purpose of the new repressive legislation now before parliament. The emergency powers act underwrites the legal basis of most of the charges against the Montreal political prisoners.

The governments' failure to convict Vallieres and Gagnon of manslaughter and other serious charges throughout repeated legal proceedings since 1966, was due in no small part to the successful defense campaign waged outside the courts. A similar setback for the current repressive campaign is possible and necessary. What is needed is a massive mobilization of opinion, of the trade unions, the New Democratic Party, the civil liberties organizations, the student movement in support of the demand that the government drop the charges against the Montreal political prisoners.

STOP THE REPRESSION NOW!
FREE THE POLITICAL PRISONERS!

Labor Challenge, Nov. 23/ 70

Does the FLQ really exist?

by John Riddell

It may well prove to be the greatest frame-up since the hanging of Louis Riel.

Fifty-one Québécois have so far been charged under the provision of the War Measures Act banning membership in or support of the "Front de Liberation du Quebec."

But as yet the massive campaign of more than 15,000 police and troops has uncovered no evidence that the tightly-knit conspiracy described to us under the name FLQ even exists!

The FLQ trials are already underway. Francois Mercier of Granby has been sentenced to fifteen months in jail for belonging to the FLQ. Four others were due to come to trial November 27 on charges of "favoring the acts, principles and lines of conduct of the FLQ."

Strange "criminals," these, accused of no criminal act, but rather of belonging to, or even merely of supporting a political organization at a time when it was still legal!

Such police state charges were justified with scare stories by federal cabinet ministers of a well-organized and well-armed conspiracy of up to 3,000 members, with connections into the highest places, ready to blow up downtown Montreal and make the "streets run red with blood" — all the classic pattern, we were told, for an insurrectionary uprising.

Andree Ferretti, former vice-president of RIN, charged with membership in now-outlawed FLQ.

Two thousand raids and five hundred arrests later, not a shred of evidence has surfaced to back up these claims. In only a half-dozen cases has any evidence been offered that any of the arrested are linked in any way with terrorist actions or their alleged perpetrators.

Indeed the only evidence heard so far, that of Bernard Lortie, Lise Balcer and members of the Rose family, would indicate that the FLQ, as a cohesive organization, never existed. Their uncontested testimony indicated that the tiny handful who kidnapped Pierre Laporte did so on the spur of the moment and had no connection whatsoever with the kidnappers of James Cross or any other "FLQ cell."

How else to explain the amazing inability of the police to find a trace of the elusive "FLQ conspiracy"? The tiny handful of kidnappers are protected from arrest by their very isolation, their lack of any organization or links to the mass movement.

Weekend Magazine carried a lurid account November 21 of the "violent history of the FLQ," presenting terrorist actions since 1962 as the work of a single unified organization. But no evidence was offered, nor is there any evidence, that the chain of incidents were connected in any way.

Does the FLQ exist? Certainly there is a pattern to the terrorist bombings that have punctuated the decade. They have been elemental and desperate protest actions of isolated individuals or small handfuls against the brutal and violent national oppression of their people — the Quebecois.

Given the failure to this point of the labor movement and the Quebec left to build any effective political movement capable of carrying forward mass action, young rebels have grasped the initials "FLQ" as a slogan, a tradition of protest, but have not yet built a movement of mass revolutionary action under this or any other name.

There is no lack of precedents for the FLQ myth.

When the term "Luddites" is used to describe opponents of new technology, it is in recollection of the slogan, "John Ludd was here," scrawled wherever British workers in the early 19th century moved into action against new job-destroying machinery. No such man or organization existed.

Later in the century the mythical figures of "Captain Swift" and "Rebecca" became focuses for similar movements.

Far from constituting a classic road for revolution, the isolated actions identified with the FLQ have only strengthened the government's hand against the Quebec left, while leading to the jailing, demoralization and dispersal of scores of revolutionary militants. And today over fifty, including top labor leaders and civil libertarians, face jail for alleged "FLQ" membership.

They and all the arrested radicals, the political prisoners, must be defended by revealing the hoax of the "FLQ conspiracy" and exposing the real threat to our security: Trudeau's assault on our civil liberties and repression of the Quebec left.

An effective mass movement must be mounted to free the arrested, to halt the repression, a movement which can show the real alternative to futile individual terrorism — mass action of the Quebecois and working people across Canada.

Labor Challenge, December 7/ 70

Law Union petition

The following is the text of the petition initiated by the Law Union, c/ o Bill Dyer, 124 Carlton St., Apt. 33, Toronto.

We, the undersigned, protest the invocation of the War Measures Act by the Canadian government.

The conditions necessary for the imposition of an Act which suspends the civil liberties of all Canadians did not exist nor do they exist now.

We call for the immediate revocation of the War Measures Act. We oppose any new repressive legislation which might follow its revocation.

We, therefore, call on Canadians from all walks of life to protest this wholly unwarranted abrogation of our democratic rights. Canadians must indicate publicly and in massive numbers that their civil liberties cannot be denied.

The long ordeal

Vallieres and Gagnon

by Dick Fidler

Shortly after this article appeared, Pierre Vallières was released on bail, a major victory for the united front defense which had fought for 44 months to free the indicted revolutionists. Charles Gagnon had already been freed, while facing further charges. Their release this spring reveals that the government, which itself could not make the case to continue holding them in jail, is proceeding without evidence in its current charges that they plotted to overthrow the government since 1968.

The long-drawn out court proceedings against Quebec revolutionists Pierre Vallières and Charles Gagnon, who have been held without bail for almost three and a half years now, continue to provide instructive examples of the state of justice in the province of Quebec.

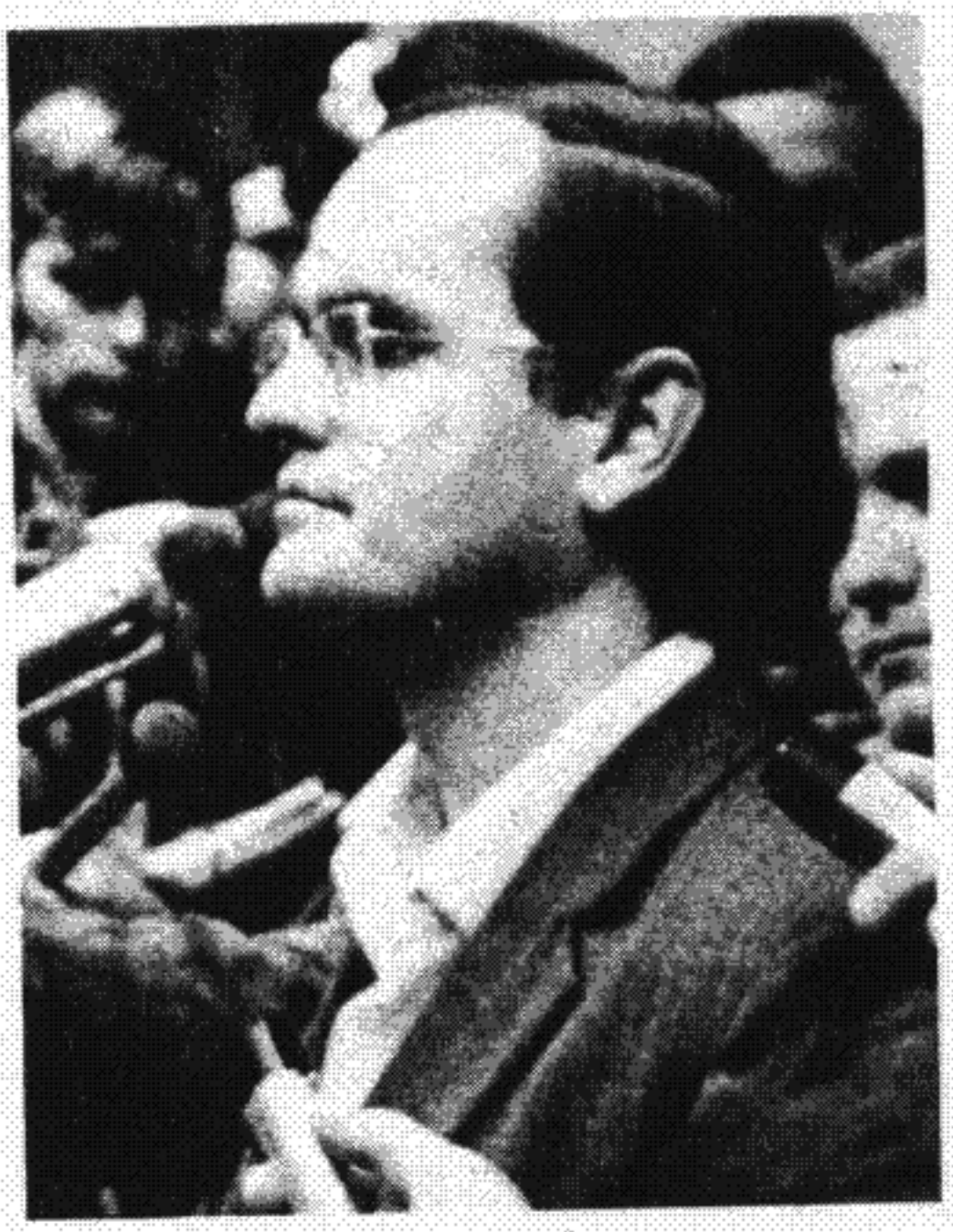
In their second trial arising from the 1966 bombing death of a secretary in the strike-bound LaGrenade shoe factory, the two leaders of the neo-FLQ, which was implicated in the bombing, were tried separately late last year on similar charges of manslaughter. The Crown testimony was similar. The witnesses were identical.

Yet when it was all over, 12 persons had voted unanimously to free Charles Gagnon, and twelve others voted, unanimously to condemn Pierre Vallieres. The latter was sentenced to serve a further 2 1/ 2 years in prison. (In their first trials, Gagnon's jury was unable to agree, while Vallieres' conviction was overturned by the Quebec Court of Appeals, which held he had been convicted for his views, not his acts.) Vallieres is appealing his conviction.

During Vallieres' trial, the Crown's witness, Serge Demers, a member of the neo-FLQ presently serving time for complicity in the LaGrenade bombing, testified that Vallieres was against violence and that he and Gagnon had had nothing to do with the LaGrenade case. The Crown responded to this unhelpful testimony from its star witness by laying no less than 19 charges of perjury against Demers in the middle of the Vallieres trial!

In a letter to the Quebec ombudsman, Vallieres and Gagnon pointed to the well-publicized charges against Demers as evidence of a conspiracy by the Crown to intimidate the jury. They cited other evidence:

— on the eve of the most recent trials, the Quebec government appointed a special prosecutor, Yves Mayrand, and laid charges of sedition against the two



Pierre Vallières

revolutionists based on Vallieres' book *Negres blancs d'Amerique* (White Niggers of America), which had been sold publicly in Quebec for 18 months.

— Also while Vallieres was being tried in Montreal, the Montreal city authorities were attempting to whip up a witch-hunt hysteria against Vallieres by linking him with a so-called "plan for global revolution" in Quebec, in testimony before the federal parliamentary committee investigating the Company of Young Canadians. Tory, Socred and Liberal MPs joined in this attack.

In addition, Vallieres and Gagnon cite repeated harassment of Crown witnesses who were associated with the FLQ; charging that they have been kept in "inhuman" conditions of solitary confinement and were refused parole, for which they are eligible, because of the arbitrary intervention of the Quebec ministry of justice.

In a letter to the two revolutionists, released Jan. 27, the ombudsman in effect acknowledged the truth of their charges, and said he had been assured that the solitary confinement of the witnesses "will not be repeated," and that Demers, who has waited threeyears to be tried on his original charges of perjury, will be brought to trial in March.

Jacques Larue-Langlois, chairman of the Committee to Aid the Vallieres-Gagnon Group, says the committee is preparing "a dossier on the situation in Quebec" which it intends to present to the Bertrand Russell tribunal. The tribunal has exposed U.S. and allied war crimes in Vietnam. Justice Minister Remi Paul responded by threatening to arrest the members of the tribunal if they come to Quebec, and charge them with "contempt of court."

Meanwhile, both Pierre Vallieres and Charles Gagnon face further charges of conspiracy in connection with three FLQ bombings in 1966. When Vallières sought last month to have the charges withdrawn, presiding judge Roger Ouimet convicted him of contempt of court and sentenced him to a further six months of prison, plus another month for Vallieres' statement when told his bail application had once again been refused: "I am disgusted by Quebec justice."

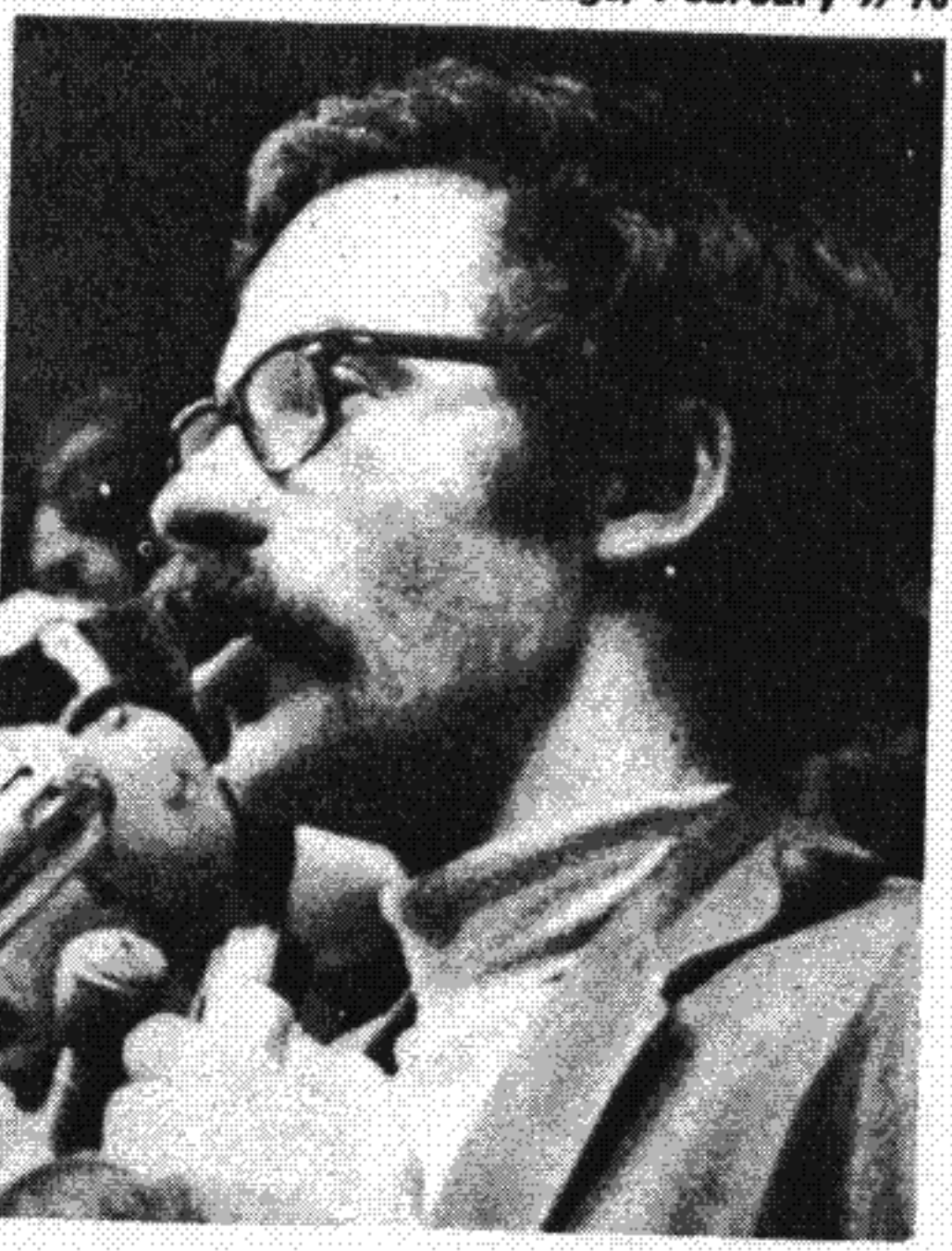
Defense committee chairman Larue-Langlois was also arrested Jan. 6 and charged with obstructing justice, disobeying a court order, and contempt of court, for a demonstration Dec. 18 when Vallieres was sentenced.

In an open letter published in the Montreal daily *Le Devoir* Jan. 6 Vallieres exposes the sorry history of their case — the intimidation of juries, the distortions of bourgeois politicians, the threats against their lawyers — and advocates that in future political prisoners be judged before special courts of State security. "There at least things would be clear and the adversaries clearly identified." He also suggests that if the Crown proceeds with new trials, he might refuse to speak, "from the beginning to the end of the trial, thus radically repudiating the rules of a game which is stacked against us in advance."

The current issue of *La Lutte Ouvriere*, the revolutionary socialist newspaper, features a front-page appeal in defense of Vallieres and Gagnon.

To rescue them from the hands of bourgeois justice, "which for three days has treated them in the shabbiest possible way," the appeal says, "is an elementary task of all those who aspire to be called revolutionary or even democratic."

Labor Challenge, February 9/ 70



Charles Gagnon

'Trudeau's credibility shaken'

by Al Cappe

"It was only when the civil liberties groups started protesting that lawyers were allowed into prison to see us. In the same way it is only by speaking out now that I will ever retain my right to do so."

This was Penny Simpson's response at a meeting of 1,500 students at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland. Someone had wanted to know if she wasn't afraid to be making a speaking tour of English Canada to mobilize opposition to the War Measures Act (the RCMP had followed her around St. John's). Her answer indicates the tone and purpose of her tour.

Simpson was sent on tour by the Young Socialists/ Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes to help set in motion the defense campaign for civil liberties. She was arrested under the Act and held incommunicado for six days in Montreal. The trip lasted three weeks, covering twelve cities in the Atlantic provinces and Ontario and meetings ranging from 80 to 1,500 people.

What was her overall impression from those three weeks? "The tide is turning against Trudeau. The mood of the country is beginning to shift from shock or blind faith in the government, to questioning and wariness and then to real distrust and reconsideration. While I thought I'd be meeting opposition all the way instead I found a great deal of support and a real desire by many for action against the government."

The YS/ LJS responded quickly to the need for the radical movement in this country to defend itself and the political prisoners in Quebec. The purpose of the tour was not only to expose the government and explain the situation in Quebec but also to begin the building of defence committees which would unite all groups and individuals into a struggle for the restoration of democratic rights and freedom for the political prisoners.

Every meeting held was either the gathering of those people interested in forming a committee or was a first meeting for a committee already established. Defense groups were sent up in Halifax, St. John's, Moncton, Peterborough, Windsor, Hamilton and other centers. Whether the meeting was 100 people or 1,500 people, the individuals in attendance realized that they were not alone. They saw that others were worried and moreover wanted to act.

Support came from many quarters. A Windsor newspaperman explained his support for Simpson's tour from his own experience: "In the first week after the

Penny Simpson

Act was invoked the cops phoned our paper and told us that they didn't 'want' to censor us but that they would if we 'forced' them to."

In Peterborough the Liberal member of parliament Hugh Faulkner politely declined to debate Simpson though he was soon to begin a tour of local high schools to drum up support for Trudeau. A group of students at Trent University decided to go around to the principals to demand equal time with him and to distribute leaflets which told the real story in the schools.

The tour had a tremendous impact not only through the favorable press coverage but through the people which it drew together. The tour showed that there is the real potential for a mass movement against the government's repression.

War Measures: Trudeau's response to radicalization

by Ross Dowson

On October 5, James Cross, British trade commissioner in Montreal, was kidnapped from his Westmount home, and a communiqué from the Front de Libération du Québec claimed responsibility. The FLQ demanded immediate release of 23 political prisoners, payment of a "voluntary tax" of $500,000 in gold bullion, immediate rehiring of 450 mail delivery truck drivers indirectly fired by the federal government last spring in a change of post office contracts, and publication in the mass media of a "political Manifesto."

The FLQ manifesto articulated many popular grievances from an anticapitalist perspective, although it projected no program or action capable of mobilizing Québécois workers and students toward power.

The Quebec and Ottawa governments refused to negotiate, and instead began arresting political activists.

On October 10, Quebec Labor Minister Pierre Laporte was kidnapped. Tension rose steadily during the following week, as Ottawa began to move thousands of troops into the federal capital, and then into Montreal. On October 16, at 4:00 a.m., the federal cabinet invoked the War Measures Act, suspending the civil liberties of all Canadians, outlawing the FLQ, and proceeding to arrest hundreds of persons and raid thousands of houses. The next day, the body of Pierre Laporte was found.

The following two articles explain why the government resorted to the War Measures Act while a subsequent article, page 15, describes how the revolutionary socialist Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière responded to the crisis.

The Trudeau government is now replacing the War Measures Act, with which it arrogated to itself sweeping totalitarian powers allegedly to cope with the "apprehended insurrection" posed by the FLQ, at the same time as it is fuelling a smoke screen of rumours about a sinister plot by prominent Quebec figures alleged to have aimed to usurp the authority of Premier Bourassa's Liberal government with a provisional regime.

Thus at one and the same time it attempts to assure the Canadian people, profoundly disturbed by the destruction with one blow of every basic human right and liberty, that there was for a period no other recourse open to it and that now it is coming through on its promise that the enforcement of the act was only temporary and something approaching normalcy will shortly again prevail.

But the legislation now being introduced by Minister of Justice Turner clearly reveals that the government intends to write into the statute books some of the most repressive aspects of the War Measures Act (search and arrest without warrant, detention without charge, etc.) while leaving the act itself in reserve — even if it is no longer to be applied at this time.

All this clearly answers the question that has continued to plague ever-widening circles. Why did the Trudeau government resort to such totalitarian powers, to such an ultimate weapon as the War Measures Act? Why didn't it utilize the crushing powers already available to it in the Criminal Code and elsewhere?

The picture is clearing up. The Trudeau government sought to take advantage of the crisis thrust on it by the kidnappings and murder, first and foremost to strike a body blow against Quebec nationalism which continues to grow and develop an increasingly independentist and revolutionary character.

It seeks new and added powers to use

against the Québecois.

At the same time it seeks to create a climate whereby it can turn back the campus revolt — the ongoing radicalization of the youth in the universities and the high schools. And simultaneously it is trying to prepare the conditions that would enable it to move in against the organized labor movement and render it less able to defend its interests.

With the enactment of the War Measures Act the Minister of Justice cautioned against the settling of old scores, against excesses.

The B.C. Socred government has passed an order to council barring from employment in institutions dispensing state funds anyone alleged to support the aims of the FLQ and to advocate the overthrow of government by force and violence. This

has already resulted in the firing of teacher Arthur Olson. The echo of this is found in the Toronto Board of Education. Are these excesses?

The address of W.H. Kelly, former deputy commissioner of the RCMP, to the Ottawa Canadian club has received widespread publicity over the mass media. He demanded stiffer immigration procedures to keep out or to deport foreign radicals already in the country — particularly those on the campuses.

He called for greater power for the police including the formal right to grill suspects, and freer use of wiretapping. Is that an excess?

The harassment of the cross-Canada university student press, the seizure of Maoist publications, the taking into custody of seven of the Vancouver Liberation Front, the persecution by the Toronto police of a draft evader to the point where he finally fled and placed himself at the mercy of U.S. authorities — are these excesses?

The self-imposed banning by CTV of a TV program because it touched on the Quebec situation. CBC's banning of a documentary on Lenin. CBC president George Davidson's order to news service employees to impose self-censorship on coverage of the Quebec crisis. Are these excesses?

Far from being excesses they are exactly what persons in high government office, spokesmen for capitalist class interest in various areas, have been advocating all along.

And they are the inevitable result of the enactment of the War Measures Act which at one blow imposed all the legal conditions for a police state: the authorizatiin by law of the police arrest and detention without warrant of anyone suspected of being a member of an unlawful organization, entry and search without warrant, detention without charge for seven days and up to 21 days on authority of an attorney general, incarceration in jail up to 90 days before a trial date need be set.

Under this act Quebec was invaded and occupied by a federal army of 7,500 men. Police raids resulted in the arrest so far of 405 persons all of whom were held incommunicado and without charge for days.

The enactment of the War Measures Act revealed in a blinding light that the much vaunted civil rights and democratic processes that are supposed to be woven into the very fabric of present day society are to all intents and purposes nonexistent.

When it was made to appear that the power of the state itself was being infringed upon, all the institutions of parliamentary democracy — Bill of Rights, Senate, House of Commons — all were cynically swept aside.

The army and the police took over on the authorization of a handful of men. With the receipt of a letter from Mr. Bourassa and another from Montreal's Mayor Drapeau drawn up two or three days earlier but dispatched to Ottawa at an agreed time, four cabinet ministers worked on documents for about an hour and dispatched them to Governor General Roland Michener who signed them.

Canada awoke the next morning under the War Measures Act and several hundred Quebecois were in jail.

The custodians of our civil rights were revealed to be the collective consciousness of the people of Canada and the specific instruments that the working class above all has forged in struggle — the trade unions, the New Democratic Party and the various other currents and tendencies of the left.

After the first shock of confusion, the socialists, civil libertarians, the NDP parliamentary caucus and the unions responded to the challenge. On the broad scale the opposition of the overwhelming majority of the NDP parliamentary caucus and the united Quebec labor movement has been instrumental in arousing the wide popular concern.

That is not to say that there has been no serious weakness in both areas. The apparent agreement of the NDP MP's to go along now with the codifying of certain aspects of the War Measures Act is particularly dangerous.

The struggle must now go on. New layers must be awakened educated and activated to win the release of all the Quebecois now imprisoned under the Act, to compel the withdrawal of the troops occupying Quebec and the abolition of the War Measures Act and to prevent the enactment of repressive legislation of any type.

Labor Challenge, November 9/ 70

Crisis revealed dynamic of Quebecois nationalism

by Arthur Young

MONTREAL — What moved the Trudeau government to invoke the dictatorial War Measures Act?

It was not humanitarian considerations. Ottawa's abrupt intervention virtually ensured the death of Pierre Laporte.

In proclaiming the Act, the government declared that Canada was on the verge of an insurrection. Trudeau and others have argued this in parliament. Jean Marchand, one of his leading ministers, went even further, claiming that the Front de Liberation du Québec "is able. . .to make life impossible in the province of Quebec."

He alluded to its presence in "every place where important decisions are taken" in Quebec. In Vancouver, he charged that the Front d'Action Politique (FRAP), the labor-backed opposition to Mayor Drapeau in the Montreal election, was but a front for the FLQ.

Drapeau, for his part, spoke of a "provisional government" that was to seize power from Quebec premier Bourassa, thereby paving the way for a revolutionary regime. Trudeau buttressed his statement.

However, no evidence has been produced to support these wild allegations. This is not surprising, for no evidence exists. The governments are thrashing about for excuses, while covering up their real motives for invoking the War Measures Act.

A firm determination moved Trudeau the federal cabinet. They would not yield to the FLQ, whatever the price. To do so would be to weaken the political authority of the central government.

Freeing the political prisoners as demanded by the FLQ would be a victory for the FLQ and invite further terrorist actions of this character. Even more important for Ottawa was the fact that revolutionary terrorism is spreading on a world scale. The Canadian ruling class, conscious of its international responsibilities, agreed with its imperialist partners that no deals could be made. Quebec was to provide the example for the world of this new hard-line approach.

The uppermost consideration in the strategy of Trudeau and Bourassa alike throughout the crisis was to refuse to grant the FLQ demands, to stall for time, and to step up police raids and arrests, hoping to discover the FLQ hideouts.

But this strategy reckoned without the impact in Quebec of public reaction to the kidnappings. Profound nationalist feeling was inclined to regard the crisis as a Quebec problem, to be dealt with by the Québécois, not the federal government. Moreover, the FLQ Manifesto, which articulated many popular grievances against the Anglo-Canadian Establishment, met a favorable response from many Québécois. Instead of showing hostility to the FLQ, they seized the occasion to express their disgust with the status quo.

The FRAP, the Montreal Central Council of the Confederation of National Trade Unions, substantial labor organizations representing thousands of working people, pronounced themselves in favor of the political aims of the FLQ — national liberation, workers power. Meetings protesting the government's "no-concessions" stand were held in many schools and colleges. It is said that over half the callers to the "hot-line" radio shows in this period blasted the government's stand.

A mass disquiet was beginning.

The authorities, recalling the massive demonstrations against Bill 63 last year, wondered how they could crush the militant nationalist movement if it took to

the streets and at the same time deal with the FLQ.

The dramatic second kidnapping, of Pierre Laporte, enormously increased the onus on the Quebec government to act in the crisis, and placed it under intolerable pressure to yield to the FLQ demands. All three trade union federations, leading professors, Parti Québecois leader René Lévesque, newspaper publisher Claude Ryan and numerous other influential figures all came out in favor of negotiating with the FLQ.

There can be no doubt that their demands expressed the sentiment of the overwhelming majority of Québécois. The Quebec government was becoming thoroughly isolated and discreditied among the Quebec population. The Bourassa cabinet was split, with perhaps the majority wishing to negotiate Laporte's release. Ryan, who was in a position to know, says he thought the Bourassa government might disintegrate. He and his friends wanted to save it.

Trudeau decided to strike decisively. By deliberately escalating the crisis, he could force the Bourassa cabinet back into line and retake complete hold of the situation.

A secondary consideration in Ottawa's thinking was that quick action in the crisis could be used to strike a blow at the entire Quebec nationalist and left movement. Trudeau was encouraged in this by Mayor Drapeau, who was seriously worried by the challenge he was facing from the FRAP in the civic election campaign. Bourassa and the Liberals, too, had every reason to welcome a hard blow at FRAP and the independentists.

And so, the atmosphere having been carefully prepared by the entry of troops into Ottawa on October 12 (two days after Laporte's kidnapping), and into Montreal on October 15, an "apprehended insurrection" was discovered simultaneously by the Montreal and Quebec City authorities early in the morning of October 16.

No doubt they hoped, through the massive police-military repression, to find and liquidate the FLQ. They also hoped, through the jailing of the left and the de facto censorship of all the news media, to end any possibility of a mass nationalist movement taking to the streets during the crisis, and to lay the basis for more enduring legislation which could be used in future to harass, intimidate and repress the independentists.

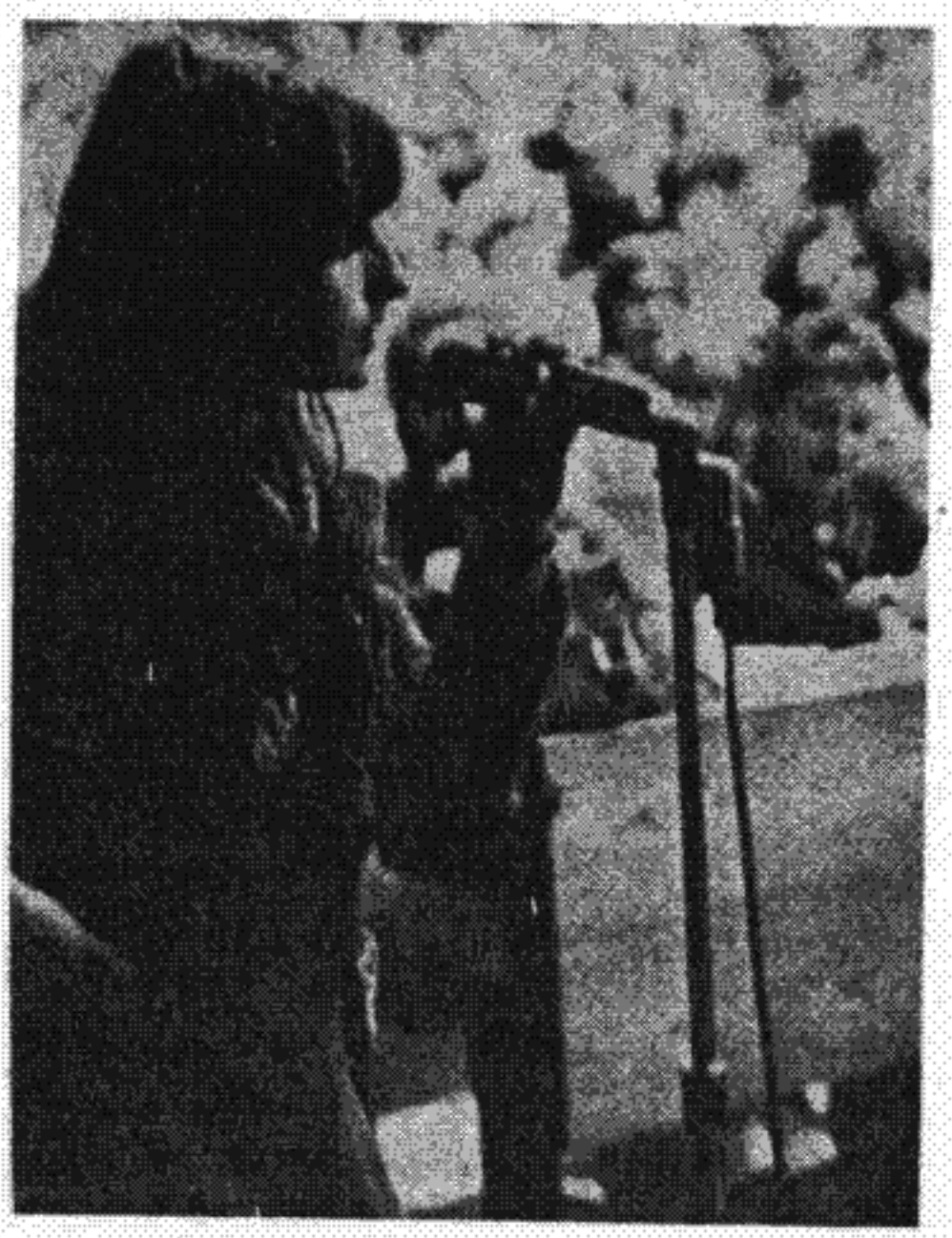
But, despite the massive manhunt, the police have yet to find James Cross. They have yet to break up any of the FLQ cells. The government's credibility has been damaged.

In the process, the Quebec government has been decisively weakened. In time of crisis, its impotence as an independent force was bared for all to see; the decisive moves came from the federal government and its army which now occupied the nation. What better expression of Quebec's oppression!

However, the crisis has weakened the left, certainly in the short term. Drapeau succeeded in preventing FRAP from gaining even a single seat on the Montreal council; many radicals are still jailed. The adventurism of the FLQ has given the government a perfect excuse to enact its new repressive legislation.

For the bourgeoisie, Quebec is a giant powderkeg. Only the massive, profound contradictions flowing from the national oppression of the Québécois, could explain how an incident as bizarre as these two kidnappings could blow up into a crisis of such immense proportions.

Labor Challenge, November 9/ 70



Manon Leger of LSO speaks to teach-in protesting Quebec repression.

LSO fights the repression

by John Riddell

There was a torrent of applause from the crowd of 2,000 when Manon Léger stood up to speak at the Montreal teach-in on the War Measures Act, October 28.

It was recognition of the importance of her candidacy for mayor of Montreal in helping to rally the opposition to the war measures, and the leading role of the Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière, through her campaign, in beginning to reestablish democratic rights abolished or called into question by the police state law.

Sweeping indiscriminately across the left, the war measures dealt the LSO campaign heavy blows. Penny Simpson, treasurer of the campaign, and Arthur Young, publicity director, were among the first arrested. They were not released until the eve of the election. Other supporters homes were raided.

The press reported a police order forbidding possession of political leaflets, and normal means of printing radical literature were blocked. Léger found her campus meetings cancelled, her radio and TV appearances censored, in fact all normal means of political activity called into question.

Léger's response to the War Measures Act, released the day after Laporte's death, was a slashing attack on the law and the complicity of Mayor Drapeau in its imposition. She termed the act "a ferocious assault against the entire labor movement, student movement, and the Québécois nation."

It was distributed on many Montreal campuses, where it was the first leaflet against the War Measures Act to be circulated.

Distribution of the main election leaflet proceeded the following week. "City hall to the wage-earners," it read. "For a French Montreal in an independent and socialist Quebec. For the democratic right of Montrealers to run their own affairs."

Election meetings were organized, despite some continuing administration obstruction, in both French and English campuses.

While other publications suffered an extensive de facto censorship, La Lutte Ouvrière, whose editor, Arthur Young, was still imprisoned, came out October 23 with a full scale attack on the war measures law and an appeal for the struggle for democratic rights.

"Immediate withdrawal of federal troops," the front-page headline read. "Revoke the war measures law. Free the detained. End police repression. End this situation which is making a farce of the civic elections. End terrorism by giving Québécois their democratic rights. Vote against the repression — vote FRAP and Léger!"

Ten thousand copies of the special issue have been distributed on campuses, at meetings, in the streets.

The next day, soldiers on guard outside the "Black Watch" barracks at Bleury and Ontario streets were surprised to find the armories being picketed by LSO members carrying signs demanding the withdrawal of federal troops, and an end to police repression. They were distributing La Lutte Ouvriere and Léger election literature to passers-by.

After about an hour the police arrived and ordered seven Léger supporters off to the station. But they were not held under the War Measures Act — another important precedent established by the campaign. After two hours detention, they were informed they were to be charged only under an obscure by-law forbidding the wearing of partisan ribbons, colors or banners within a week of the election.

Manon Léger's vote of 7,180 attracted considerable notice — it was a quarter of the total distributed among five opposition mayoralty candidates, one of whom was a fairly well-known bourgeois politician.

"It was a real farce," Léger commented election night. "Mayor Drapeau won by conducting a campaign of terror. He can't claim these elections give him any democratic mandate.

Quebec: Canada's internal colony

By Dick Fidler

For most of us, the autoworkers' strike against General Motors is for a cost-of-living wage bonus, job security, and other easily identifiable labor issues. But if you were to ask a GM worker at Ste-Thérèse, Quebec why he went on strike, chances are he'd say it was mainly to be able to speak his own language on the job.

It may be hard to believe, but the world's biggest corporation, with operations in dozens of countries, refuses union demands to make French the working language at its Ste-Therese plant — where 19 of every 20 workers are French-speaking! And until this month, GM even refused to negotiate in French with its workers because it "costs too much" — General Motors, whose **profits** last year were 19 times the annual budget of the United Nations Organization!

The situation of the Ste-Thérèse autoworkers goes a long way to explaining the present crisis in Quebec. What's involved is not just a couple of kidnappings, or the murder of a minister. It's not just the 400-odd arrests, the 2,000 searches and raids, the 7,500 federal troops, the censorship of political literature, all of it associated with Trudeau's dictatorial War Measures Act.

It's the poverty and oppression experienced every waking moment by an oppressed nation of six million people — the "white niggers of America", as a young Quebecois writer describes his people. It's the constant humiliations of workers who must "speak white" — speak English — to earn their daily living. And, most important for us, it's the powerful thrust forward of an entire nation on the move for its independence, its "souveraineté".

The Quebecois are oppressed because their country is, in effect, a colony. What else can you call a nation with its own language, its own culture, religion, laws, historical traditions, its own territory — yet where four out of every five people work for foreigners who speak another language and insist the natives do likewise? A colonial system buttressed by a political regime, "confederation", that puts the Quebecois in a perpetual minority, continually threatened with the loss of their language, culture, in short, their identity as a nation?

The governments — including the one at Quebec City that Trudeau rendered redundant when he sent in the troops and suspended civil liberties — have documented the results of this exploitative relationship for all to see. Unemployment: almost twice the rate in Ontario, close to half the Canadian total. Poverty: wage rates 40 percent lower than Ontario's for the same jobs; more than half a million people — 10 percent of the population — on welfare, with an additional 20 percent subsisting at the poverty level. A gross unevenness of economic development between different regions within Quebec, so that incomes in Gaspe, for example, are only half those in Montreal.

Those are statistics. But what can statistics tell us of the daily humiliation of being a Quebecois in Canada, of coming up against the colossal arrogance of bosses who won't even bother to speak the

language of the majority? "A language spoken only after five o'clock in the afternoon is already dead," as they say in Quebec.

It's not that the English population of posh Westmount, Hampstead or Mount Royal is unable to learn French. Some can speak it quite well, in fact — on trips to Europe. But behind their colonialist hostility to the "French fact" is the basic fact that in Quebec "Capital speaks English." Everything is designed to keep it that way, to ensure that the top management posts, the best jobs, the biggest salaries, go to the English element.

That is why the English-speaking rulers of Quebec and their agents in the provincial and municipal governments have fought tooth and nail to keep the privileged English school system.

As long as there are English public schools, they will be used by immigrants and Quebecois who will want their children to be educated in the language of business. But that is why, to counter anglicization, and to make French the language of commerce, many Quebecois are demanding a French-only school system.

Demonstrating to make McGill a university serving the Quebec nation.

Even when a French Quebecois manages to achieve a high academic standing, he or she will be paid much less than an English-speaking inhabitant of Quebec with the same level of education, according to studies of the government's Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. By the way, whatever happened to the Bi and Bi commission?. . .

But Quebec is a colony with a difference. Situated in the heartland of North America, it is relatively industralized, urbanized. .and proletarianized. Remember Maria Chapdelaine, whose brothers took off for the United States to get jobs? Today, three quarters of a century later, they would head for Montreal, there to form part of the growing subproletariat of unemployed and partially employed youths who are now flocking to the separatist movement. Barely six percent of the Quebec population now lives in rural areas. And much of this urbanization has occurred over the last 30 years.

The rapid transition from rural, parochial and French Quebec to the urban, alienating environment of English-dominated Montreal has had a traumatic shock effect on the collective thinking of the Quebecois.

The massive contradictions of Quebec society — on the one hand, its industrialization; on the other, the effects of its exploitation by U.S. and English-Canadian imperialism — are felt most keenly by young Quebecois. A belated reform in the educational system in recent years has sharply escalated school attendance and college facilities. But hundreds of thousands are graduating each year to find themselves without jobs — any jobs, let alone jobs commensurate with their abilities and training.

Their demands have undergone a corresponding development. In 1964, I marched with 4,000 other Quebec students on the legislature in Quebec City (a big demonstration in those days) to demand "la gratuité scolaire" — free university education. We still don't have that. But in 1968, close to 50,000 students occupied their junior colleges and high schools when an official report confirmed that Quebec was producing thousands more graduates each year than it could provide jobs for. And last year, virtually the entire senior student population of Quebec demonstrated in the streets for a French unilingual Quebec, and against Bill 63, the Union Nationale government's move to entrench English school privileges.

Almost all Quebecois students are independentists now; they want a sovereign Quebec with all the political powers of any "normal" state. And a growing number understand that a French Quebec will only come when all the leading industries are taken from foreigners and put in the control of the Quebecois workers themselves — a socialist Quebec.

Not far behind the radical-minded students are the heavy battalions of organized labor. The militant trade union struggles of recent years have mobilized not just the traditional industrial sectors but the most dispossessed — the Montreal taxi drivers, the Lapalme transport workers, the Liquor Board clerks — and newly organized sectors, including teachers, civil servants, even the Montreal police!

The workers have adopted the most advanced forms of struggle, in several instances occupying their factories to protest threatened closures. Key issues reflect the impact of the national question: wage parity with Montreal, and between Montreal and Ontario, is an increasingly popular demand, as is the demand that French be made the

language of work at all levels in the enterprise.

For all Quebecois, the rebirth in recent years of a distinctive Quebecois national culture — popular songs, plays, books, magazines, pamphlets, films — has signalled the development of a new politicization which extends deep into the fabric of Quebec society.

The near-absence of a distinctive class of Quebecois capitalists has meant that, until very recently, this growing national and political consciousness has been channeled exclusively through the political parties of the petty bourgeoisie — first the rural-based Union Nationale; later, in the early 1960's, the urban-based Liberals under Jean Lesage and René Lévesque.

But these traditional parties, themselves unwilling and unable to challenge even the restrictive constitutional framework of confederation, proved inadequate for the new urban middle classes, the educated technocrats who have linked their future to the provincial state bureaucracy and institutions, the new universities and the professions. Increasingly thrust toward the ideology of independentism, they formed the Parti Québécois. Last April the PQ surprised many people by winning the support of one in three French-speaking Quebecois, and about half the working class vote in east-end Montreal, the major concentration of political-minded Quebecois workers.

These workers voted for the PQ not for its procapitalist program — the PQ welcomes foreign capital and pretends that Quebec's national inequality can be overcome simply through political independence — but because they now clearly see in political independence the path of their own liberation. The real working class dynamic of this politicization is revealed more clearly in the Front d'Action Politique (FRAP), the pro-unilingualist, pro-independentist political party formed by trade unions and citizens' committees to contest the recent Montreal civic elections.

FRAP, which polled over 20 percent of the vote in many areas, sees itself as the first step toward labor political action on a Quebec-wide scale. This is why important spokesmen for the ruling class like federal Regional Development Minister Jean Marchand and Mayor Drapeau went to such lengths to slander and villify FRAP during the FLQ kidnapping crisis.

The "quiet revolution" is no longer "quiet." But is it — or, more correctly, will it become — a revolution?

We've come a long way since 1963 and the first FLQ bombings. But the FLQ, ironically, has not advanced. It's just operating in a changed political context, where thanks to the rise of the mass independentist movement the ruling class has less room to maneuver; a context even less favorable than 1963 to the success of such isolated acts of individual terror. And the FLQ is paying the price, as are all groups which lack a program capable of mobilizing the workers in mass action. The Front de Libération Populaire (FLP) of Stanley Gray, for example, has disappeared from the scene following a brief, comet-like appearance amidst the constellation of ultraleft groups.

Revolutionary developments are on the agenda in Quebec, all right. But what is required is to build the leadership that can reach out to where the action really is, to the growing mass movement for independence, to mobilize it around the socialist program which alone can guarantee the survival and emancipation of the Quebec nation, through a workers' government. The field is wide open.

Young Socialist, November/ 70

Behind Quebec's unrest

What lies behind the struggle for a French-only school system in Quebec, the explosive and revolutionary character of Quebec strikes such as that against Domtar last fall, the ferment that produces and reproduces powerful nationalist currents, and thrusts idealistic youth into acts of terror bombings?

The following material, culled from a series of articles that appeared last October in the Montreal daily *La Presse*, gives a clear insight into these processes. The articles were the essence of the as yet unpublished 3rd and 4th chapters of the report of the federal government's Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. The writer of the series has been harassed by the RCMP for refusing to disclose her sources for the leaked commission material which is slated to undergo a "final preparation" before being officially presented sometime later this year.

In a nutshell, the study demonstrates that French Canada is an oppressed nation within confederation and that the source of this oppression is the domination of its economy by foreign capital — English Canadian and U.S. The cultural, educational, linguistic discrimination, which it so vividly reveals, stems from this basic economic oppression and serves to reinforce it.

For instance, the report shows that Quebec economy suffers many of the classic distortions that colonial countries suffer at the hands of imperialist powers. French Canadian business establishments are small, produce little, pay low salaries and are concentrated in raw materials, whereas U.S. and English capital is large, has high productivity, pays better salaries (but not as good as elsewhere in Canada) and accounts for 95 percent of the province's total exports. It dominates the modern processing industry.

How does the domination of foreign capital affect the French Canadian? The commission found that he works for bosses who import highly paid administrators and technicians, and only hire French Canadians for the low-paying dirty work; bosses who discount French Canadian education, whose knowledge of French exhausts itself at "bonjour and bonsoir," and demand knowledge of English as a prerequisite for promotion and even employment.

Over one-third of the French-speaking people in Canada are blue collar workers concentrated at the bottom of the occupational scale and under-represented in the better paying sectors of professionals and administrators. In Quebec, and especially Montreal, they are even less present proportionally in these sectors and since 1930 have lost ground in the professions.

"The higher the position, the more Anglophones there are," notes the commission. It found that as soon as one passes from the category of hourly paid workers, to administration, the proportion of French Canadians drops from two-thirds to one-third, the latter mainly foremen. In the highest administration the proportion of French Canadians drops to one in seven. In Montreal where the work force is 60 percent French Canadian, English-speaking personnel hold 63 percent of the administrative posts and 83 percent of the jobs paying over $12,000.

The doors of high administration and technology remain largely closed to French Canadians. Qualified French Canadian technicians and administrators are forced out of the key and high-paying sectors of the economy into government and public service.

"It is often claimed that French Canadian culture has a strong prejudice unfavorable to the materialism

"Born for a small crust of bread" is how French-speaking citizens describe their fate in colonized Quebec. Above, a street scenè in Montreal.

of science and industry ... ." However, says the commission, recent studies show that both French and English Canadians attach the same value to a career in industry and big business.

Aside from downright discrimination ("It cannot be doubted for a moment that there are cases of flagrant discrimination; We have too much first hand testimony which proves that people have been rejected simply because they were French-speaking Canadians") the French Canadian may face a series of preliminary conditions which are exceptionally hard for him. He (1) must possess perfect English; (2) accept being moved out of Quebec; (3) must function inside the business in the same way as his English colleagues — that is, think and act in English.

In distribution of incomes it is again very clear that the French Canadian population is an economically oppressed nation within Canada. In Canada as a whole French Canadian incomes are only 80 percent as high as English Canadian incomes. And in Quebec they are only 60 percent as high.

Does lack of education account for the disparity between English and French Canadian jobs and incomes? No, says the commission. It is true that French Canadian are less educated than any ethnic group in Canada execpt the Italians — one English Canadian out of eight, one

Frencn Canadian out of sixteen and one Italian out of thirty-two, goes to university. That corresponds to the hierarchy of incomes. No education, no job; no job, no education. But even with equal education the French Canadian will still earn less than his English counterpart. Equal education reduces the differences between English and French incomes by slightly less than half. The other half of the disparity is explained solely by the fact of being French Canadian, and is sharper in Montreal than elsewhere.

For the first time an official, scientific study confirms that bilingualism is one-way, and the working language is English, — facts well known to French Canadians.

In secondary industry in Quebec (Montreal excepted), where 76 percent of the work force is French-speaking, 96 percent of the French administrators are required to speak English. Only 59 percent are required to speak French. In Montreal more than 60 percent earning over $5,000 are English and only 14 percent of them must be bilingual. In contrast 78 percent of the French must speak English.

English is the language of the "job which pays." But even among blue collar workers the working language is English because the daily communication between departments, memos, training manuals, graphs, etc., are generally unilingual English. An "anomalous situation," the commission calls this injustice which forces a large number of French workers to learn English to accommodate the boss.

What of the future? The commission sees only more of the same. "One can certainly predict that the businesses will tend to improve the knowledge of English among their employees rather than give French a choice place in the high administration . . . it appears that the advantage for an Anglophone in learning French is only an abstract value, symbolic of good faith and 'good intentions' while for a Francophone the fact of learning English is a vital question necessary in the exercise of his profession. The administrators consider that because of the pressure of the business world of North America English will remain the dominant language of work, even in the Francophone regions of Canada."

This inequality between the "equal partners" has worsened in 30 years and will only be aggravated as the economy expands, as the demand for highly skilled and specialized manpower increases — unless the root cause of this oppression — the foreign domination of the French Canadian nation — economically and therefore politically and culturally, is removed.

In fact, only a mass mobilization of the French Canadian workers organized and determined to eliminate the exploitation of Quebec by foreign capital and to abolish the system that feeds on the resulting poverty, unemployment and discrimination will remove the basic causes of the national oppression. Only the socialist revolution will enable the French Canadian nation to stand on its own feet and establish a free and equal relationship with the rest of Canada.

Workers Vanguard, March 10/ 69

The fruits of bilingualism

by John Riddell

The following article illustrates the reaction of one big Anglo-Canadian corporation to the democratic demand that it respect the language of the people it exploits.

Can an elected school board member be fired, evicted and run out of town merely for criticizing the chairman of his board?

In the Quebec mining town of Matagami, school board member Maurice Loyer, who denounced the policies of board chairman John Iglesias as "dictatorial and anti-French," has been fired from his job with a Noranda subsidiary, Matagami Lakes Mines, for what company manager Murray Airth calls "disloyalty." Loyer has been a consistent critic of Noranda's well-known anti-French policies.

The Moyement pour l'Intégration Scolaire (MIS), Quebec movement for a unified French-language school system, has launched a fund to enable Maurice Loyer to remain in Matagami and continue his struggle. MIS president Raymond Lemieux declares: "Mr. Airth's action brings into the open the scandal of the colonialist domination of the Noranda empire over the entire life of the north-west region of Quebec. It is time for Noranda to know that if it does not stop operating in the purest tradition of 19th century colonial capitalism, an angry people will take away its right to exploit the under ground resources of Quebec."

Matagami is a fine example of that thriving Canadian institution, the company town. Aside from 22 independent property-owners, all the land in the town belongs to Noranda, which owns the mine and is the main employer. The iron grip of Noranda is felt not only on the job and in the municipal government but in the schools, where, like the other English-speaking monopolies that dominate Quebec, it maintains the privileges of the English-language school system.

Candidates for the school board must by law be property owners. Yet the company owns all the land: So all candidates must obtain a temporary transfer of real estate from Noranda in order to stand for election to the school board.

School board chairman Iglesias is a superintendent for Noranda — Maurice Loyer's boss at the mine. In denouncing Iglesias Loyer was only attacking the policies of Noranda — not only anti-worker, anti-union but viciously anti-French.

Mine manager Airth summed it up neatly Jan. 10. In view of his position on the schools question, Loyer is "not the kind of employee we like to have." Noranda gave him until Feb. 1 to get out of his company-owned home — leaving him no choice but to resign from the school board and leave town. In the case of Victor Meloche, who supported a move to hold a special meeting of the school board to examine Iglesias' policies, Noranda was more subtle — they simply transferred him to Timmins, Ont.

Pointing out that the Quebec education minister has had for several months a complete dossier on the Matagami situation, the MIS has demanded government intervention to "end the illegalities of the Matagami school board." Further, the MIS demands integration of Matagami into the regional school district, in which it is the only autonomous board and has promised to continue its fight in north-east Quebec into the coming school board elections.

What's wrong with the Parti Quebecois

by Dick Fidler

The success of the Parti Québécois in the April 29 Quebec election — it won close to 25 percent of the total vote, and the support of almost one in three French-speaking voters — has encouraged all Quebec nationalists and provoked some uneasy rethinking in the federal government.

Already, the executive of the powerful Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society, which boasts well over 100,000 members, mainly middle class has declared itself in favor of the formation of an independentist party to contest the next federal election, expected in 1972.

Certainly the strong support among broad sectors of the Québécois electorate, including the working class areas in Montreal's east end which elected six of the PQ's seven deputies, for a party whose main appeal was its call for an independent state of Quebec, shows that the thrust of Quebec politics is towards separation from the rest of Canada. Since this independentist sentiment has been expressed through the PQ, we are bound to ask what sort of independence this party proposes for the Quebec nation.

The answer is clearly indicated in two books published by the PQ during the election campaign. La Solution, the party's 125-page official program, was an overnight bestseller, with sales of over 60,000 (one for every 10 PQ voters). The other book, originally produced by the PQ's documentation committee for limited distribution to party militants, is entitled La Souveraineté et L'Economie (Sovereignty and the Economy).

These books are a rude shock to anyone in the left inclined to believe the current line in the daily press that the PQ is a nationalist, Quebecois equivalent of the New Democratic Party. To be sure, some modest reforms familiar to every NDPer are proposed — a capital gains tax, higher minimum wage, free university education, universal compulsory medicare etc.

But on housing for instance, the PQ calls only for more "social housing," without explaining whether this means public or private.

The PQ's labor program is truly ominous. Envisaging a greatly expanded intervention of the capitalist state in the trade unions, designed to avoid what it terms the "excessive scope of labor conflicts," it has overtones of the corporatist dream of labor-management "unity" — with provision for compulsory trade union membership for all workers, a complex apparatus of "tripartite participation" by bosses, government and unions in preventive conciliation commissions, and legal recognition of only those unions originating in Quebec and staffed by Quebec citizens.

Labor councils and federations will be recognized by the State provided they have a "Quebec character" and show "evidence of good faith." Significantly, even the Montreal Council of the Confederation of National Trade Unions felt obliged to dissociate itself from the PQ's labor program when it voted to endorse the party during the election.

Even the PQ's promise to make French the sole official language is seriously undercut by its pledge to "recognize the school rights of the English

Founding convention of Parti Québecois.

minority...from elementary school to university," that is, to preserve the English school system, a symbol and instrument of English-speaking capital's domination of Quebec and to continue to oppose the mass movement for a French unilingual school system.

As for the political forms of "sovereignty," the PQ proposes a presidential republic associated with Canada through a negotiated "monetary community and the essential elements of a common market." Quebec would withdraw from the military alliances NATO and NORAD, and would take its seat in the United Nations.

But the key aspect of the PQ program — what it calls the "essential economic content" of independence — most clearly reveals the utter inadequacy of the PQ's "solution."

La Souveraineté et l'Economie vividly and eloquently details the shocking facts of Quebec's inequality as a nation within the Canadian confederation — its lower standard of living, higher unemployment, the serious income disparities between different regions within Quebec, etc.

Quebec's economy is increasingly oriented around light consumer goods industries and the export of raw materials and thus highly vulnerable to unfavorable developments in the world capitalist market. The PQ economists make clear that the main problem lies in the fact that Quebec industry is not owned by Québécois, that is, that the Quebec economy has not developed as a national economy, but as a subordinate part of world imperialism, a source of raw materials, cheap labor, and a market for finished goods produced elsewhere. Of the 50 big corporations which account for 75 percent of Quebec's industrial production, only three are controlled by Québécois capitalists. (The largest is Bombardier,

the motor toboggan manufacturer, which is 11th on the list.)

Doesn't this analysis confirm in striking fashion what socialists have maintained all along, that the only "solution" to Quebec's national inequality lies in the Quebecois taking their industries out of the hands of foreign capital, "nationalizing" them in the fullest sense of the word and operating them in a planned economy under workers control?

That's just what the Parti Quebecois does **not** propose. You won't find imperialism as a word or concept mentioned once in either of these books. Instead, in La Souveraineté et l'Economie, we are told that if only the Quebec (bourgeois) state is given the power to "play the role of any normal government" Quebec will be able to overcome its underdevelopment.

Foreign investment will be positively welcomed. As La Souveraineté puts it, a "sovereign" State of Quebec will be financed in large part "from foreigners desirous of coming to do business in Quebec because here there is one of the most lucrative markets in the world. Foreigners who, moreover, would come in much greater numbers if we had, instead of a semi-State, a State fully responsible and endowed with the necessary powers to carry out a real development policy."

It doesn't require much imagination to picture that sort of "development." Quebec has experienced it rather extensively for about a hundred years.

In fact, the PQ take a great pains to assure us that what it is proposing is not radical at all. Most of the essential "tools" and "levers" for the "competent" administration of the State of Quebec have been created, particularly during the last ten years; they incllude the traditional instrucments of postwar capitalist economies, such as government investment funds, heavy subsidization of private industry (to guarantee profits), the occasional "mixed" enterprises and considerable investment in "overhead social capital" like educational facilities. All that remains is to complete the process — by giving Quebec full powers.

"The organization and experimentation phase is now terminated," says La Souveraineté. "It permitted us among other things to initiate several thousands of individuals to a modern economic activity."

This is the voice of Quebec's "new middle class," the well-paid "technocrats," the civil servants and managerial elements the would-be bourgeoisie who comprise a large part of the PQ cadres and leadership. Not only do they almost all come from the more traditional bourgeois parties — the PQ is itself a combination of dissident Liberals (Lévesque), Socreds (Grégoire) as well as the petty bourgeois nationalists of the old Rassemblement pour l'Indépendence Nationale, etc. — but they are all firmly wedded to the bourgeois outlook. Longstanding ideologists for the bourgeoisie, they want to **use** foreign capital, not expropriate it.

The last chapter of La Souveraineté, a series of questions and answers, most clearly reveals the completely bourgeois, pro-imperialist character of the PQ's program.

Particularly instructive is the astute discussion of the possibility of economic reprisals by English Canadian and American capital against a sovereign Quebec. At present, we are told, it is "one of the rules of the game" that English Canadian capital strongly opposes Quebec's independence. But as the movement develops, the big capitalists will develop a "dual strategy."

"If it is clearly apparent that the Parti Québécois can take power, the corporations which will have pulled out all the stops to avoid the spread of the idea will exert just as strong pressures on both the federal and Quebec governments to see that if separation is to occur, it occurs in order, in moderation, in as rational a framework as possible. 'Don't upset the applecart.' (English in original)...

"In fact, once they have made this turn, the principal adversaries of independence will become its principal allies."

As for the American corporation, "it has above all learned to live and develop amidst an extraordinary variety of political regimes. It is obvious that violent extremism, continual disorder, very discordant laws, and excessive taxation, hinder its operations. But within reasonable limits, it knows how to operate and it does operate. Its competitive powers

are so strong, so sustained, that it would not consider leaving any market or territory provided it can function normally there....''

Thus the PQ blatantly appeals to the foreign capitalists and their governments for their support as the best defense against the rising mass movement for an independent Quebec. The final section of La Souveraineté is an extended polemic against ''doctrinairism,'' the PQ's substitute word for socialism.

The PQ's electoral appeal, of course, is not its support for foreign capital, but its nationalist rhetoric and its offer of political ''sovereignty.''

Yet everything about this party — its origins, its leadership, its program, its commitment to parliamentarism and opposition to the mass extraparliamentary movements on issues like unilingualism — indicate its thoroughly bourgeois character.

It is even doubtful that a PQ government, borne to power on the crest of a powerful mass movement for independence, could maintain the social stability required by its bourgeois policies without resorting to the most repressive forms of rule — dispensing with parliament, measures to suppress the trade unions, etc. A PQ government would be a reactionary government.

The PQ program shows how utterly unable the party is to resolve the national oppression of Quebec, which is rooted precisely in the capitalist nature of its economy.

With over 90,000 members, most of them workers, the PQ, even as an electoral machine, is an extremely unstable phenomenon. It represents above all a transient stage in the developing mass movement, before the working class has been able to assert itself as the revolutionary leadership of the national struggle.

Balancing between the mass movement and an (at present) hostile Establishment in English Canada and Quebec, the PQ may be capable of taking what appear to be anti-imperialist stances on particular issues in the next period. But in the last analysis, it will remain an agency of imperialism.

For the workers, the PQ is a detour. Insofar as their nationalism leads them to anticapitalist conclusions, they will have to move beyond the PQ, along the road of independent class action, and in the process to smash this obstacle in their path.

Labor Challenge, July 27/ 70

What strategy for socialists?

by Phil Courneyeur

MONTREAL—Over 70 people crowded into the Forum Socialiste here March 26 to hear a spirited debate on what the revolutionary left should do in the April election cámpaign.

Speakers were FLQ leader Charles Gagnon, co-defendent of Pierre Vallières and now out on bail after three years as a political prisoner; Stanley Gray, prominent student leader, of the Front de Libération Populaire, and Arthur Young of the Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière, the Quebec Trotskyist movement.

Gagnon spoke in an individual capacity. He bluntly opposed any form of left participation in the elections. ''We must categorically reject running candidates in elections,'' he said. ''We reject this form of struggle as a waste of time.'' Gagnon insisted that ''the only form of political action for the revolutionary left is to denounce vehemently all electoral activity, not only in words, but also with deeds.''

Stanley Gray represented the FLP. Initially he expressed agreement with Gagnon's contribution — but a significant reservation became clear. While Gagnon categorically rejected the Parti Quebecois of Rene Levesque, Gray argued that the PQ ''represents a step forward.'' At the same time Gray quickly reassured his audience that the FLP has no faith in the PQ. ''The liberation of Quebec will not come through the PQ,'' he said. Gray

counterposed a strategy of strictly extra-parliamentary actions. He announced plans for a mass demonstration on the eve of the election. The revolutionary socialist movement must be built now, he argued; built through direct actions in the schools, the factories and in the streets.

Gray attacked the LSO demand for the formation of a Quebec labor party as "talking in à void." He considers support for the NDP to be reactionary. "The NDP in Quebec does not represent any section of the working class. It is clearly federalist and reactionary," he said.

Arthur Young, editor of *La Lutte Ouvrière*, defended the program of the LSO. He first defined the areas of agreement on the panel — that the objective of the revolutionary left in Quebec was for an independent, socialist and French Quebec. Further, that only the working class could lead such a revolution. And finally, that the question of participating in elections was tactical, not one of principle, for socialists.

The real issue before the people of Quebec, Young argued, is a workers and farmers government. But the working masses have deep-going illusions in parliamentary politics and a low level of class conciousness. The urgent challenge before revolutionary socialists in Quebec is to confront the capitalist parties and their ideology on their ground. The heightened interest of the part of tens of thousands of workers in politics during an election gives the socialist left a vast opportunity to pose concrete alternatives.

The LSO calls for the formation of a trade union-based labor party in Quebec. The labor movement can only win a workers and farmers government by building its own political instrument.

Within the context of the LSO's labor party demand, Young explained his support of the NDP campaign in Quebec. While the NDP is organizationally very weak and presents a very feeble reformist and federalist program, it is a party sustained by a section of the Quebec Federation of Labor and responsible to it. The immediate challenge before the whole trade union movement is to carry forward the NDP initiative by launching a labor party in Quebec.

Young challenged Stanley Gray's position that the PQ marks "a step forward" for the left in Quebec. "The PQ is a detour," he said. "The PQ stands for negotiating with Ottawa for selling Quebec to United States capital. Its program is reformist and it does not rest on the working class. It represents the small business and professional sectors; not the working people," Young said.

The lively counterposition of views between Gray and Young was matched by the audience participation during the discussion period.

Particularly significant was the announcement by Jean Hérivault, chairman of the meeting, that the LSO is presenting its own candidate in a selected constituency as a model of how to present a socialist campaign. **Labor Challenge, Apr. 6.**

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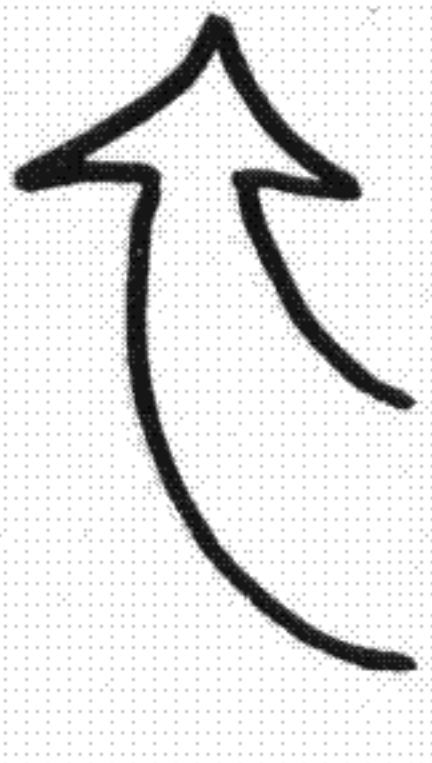

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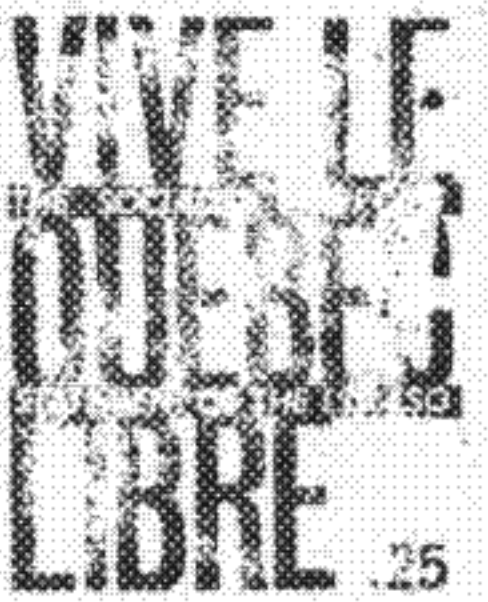

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Inside a Quebec jail

by Arthur Young

"What do you think of our society?"

"What does socialism mean?"

"You can't change human nature; there'll always be criminals and lazy people who don't want to work."

"If you're a socialist, then do you support the FLQ?"

I was in a small room talking to two well-dressed men. It was the kind of political discussion every socialist has had with hundreds of people. With one exception.

My two interlocutors were cops, and they'd started the conversation by telling me if they weren't satisfied with my answers, I could stay in jail for three months. "The Bill of Rights no longer exists," one of them had loudly proclaimed.

I had already been in jail several days before this discussion. And I was to spend several more days behind bars — a week in all, supposedly on suspicion of supporting the FLQ.

But in this, the only time the police took the trouble to question me, they asked only a few perfunctory questions about the FLQ. Like what did I think of the terrorists. They did not even bother to ask what I was doing when the kidnappings took place.

Arthur Young

It was hardly necessary for the cops to throw me in jail for a week and seize my personal papers to find out what my political views are. They could have bought, for one dollar, a year's subscription to La Lutte Ouvrière, the newspaper which I edit, to find out that I am a revolutionary socialist opposed to individual terrorism.

There were some four hundred of us, political prisoners, and we compared notes. Did the police really think that Michel Chartrand, head of the Montreal CNTU labor council (65,000 affiliate members) was an FLQ terrorist? Gaston Miron, one of Quebec's leading poets? Pauline Julien, internationally-known chansonnière? They were all behind bars like me. So were numerous journalists, antiwar Vietnamese, Parti Québécois leaders and candidates, and two FRAP candidates.

It was Friday morning, October 16, that Penny Simpson and I were woken by the door buzzer, ringing imperiously at 5 a.m. We opened the door, and four cops barged in, searching every corner of our room.

They soon filled their car trunk with mounds of papers and books. One unfortunate, lowest in rank, got assigned to inspecting my large library, looking at every page of every book — searching for machine guns, no doubt.

An incredible hubbub at the police station. In the basement, hundreds of people are being booked, fingerprinted, photographed and shipped upstairs. Penny and I recognize many. My protests against being fingerprinted gain me the threat of having my fingers broken. But even this short protest holds up the assembly-line processing of the political prisoners.

Upstairs, in a common cell with dozens of others, we begin to get the picture.

Almost everybody was arrested at the same time. The cops had prepared the operation for days. Several reported they awoke with a flashlight shining in their eyes and a gun pointed at their head.

I was to pass a week behind bars, in a tiny cell which was only large enough to let me take four steps. Only rarely was I let out for a "recreation" period — a half hour walk with other prisoners in the corridor outside my cell.

The spirit of solidarity rapidly grew among the 24 prisoners in my cell block. Sharing everything was the norm. The brief "recreation" periods became the moment for intense political discussions among all of us: socialists, students, independentists, unionists, and non-politicals picked up by mistake.

As political prisoners, we got special treatment — worse than convicted criminals. No newspapers. For days no showers, no shaves, no cigarettes, no pen or paper. The radio played during every waking hour — but was turned off promptly just before every news broadcast. Guards were forbidden to give us any news. And on the outside, no one could find out who was in jail.

After a few days, conditions began to improve. They finally even offered to contact a friend for us to tell them where we were. No change of heart by Bourassa or Trudeau, but a response to the growing protests against our arbitrary and unjustified imprisonment.

Did the government hope to break our spirit? It certainly failed. The mood among my prison comrades was one of increased determination, of a new solidarity between radicals of differing views, and a new insight for many into the fraud of Canadian "democracy."

I was freed as quickly and secretly as I was arrested. A guard crept silently into my cell in the middle of the night, woke me and spirited me away. I was stripped and searched. My prison diary and a list of names of prison comrades were confiscated.

Within half an hour, I was free again. I had been jailed for a week, in which neither I nor any of the 400 others had seen a judge or lawyer, and was released without charge, without explanation.

Thirteen floors down, I perused the deserted street. It looked more lovely than I had ever seen it before. The young soldier with the machine gun guarding the prison told me to beat it, fast. I did.

Labor Challenge, November 9/ 70

Call to international protests

In a statement issued October 25, the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution founded by Leon Trotsky, condemned the Trudeau government's "wave of repression against the people of Quebec and Canada," and called for international demonstrations of protest.

The Fourth International statement denounces the widespread arrests, raids, and seizures of literature carried out under the War Measures Act, including the arrests of two leaders of the Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière, the Quebec Trotskyist organization.

It declares:

"The Fourth International calls for the immediate repeal of this (War Measures) Act and all similar repressive legislation. All political prisoners must be released. All victimization and persecution must stop. Demonstrations for the repeal of the Act and in solidarity with all political prisoners should be organized in as many countries as possible."

The individual terror practised by the FLQ, it notes, is not "the correct means to bring about a mass struggle for an independent socialist Quebec.

"The Canadian government, no doubt with the advice and guidance of the U.S. State Department, has seized the opportunity to exploit the situation for their own reactionary aims. . .

"The fact that they have to resort to such measures is a sign of their own political bankruptcy."

Chartrand's message from prison

From his cell in the headquarters of the Quebec Provincial Police, Michel Chartrand, Montreal labor leader on trial for "seditious conspiracy," has managed to issue the following tape-recorded message:

"Today, as in the time of Duplessis, when you attack the regime, you are treated as traitor to the country and the State. Mr. Bourassa said it on television: what the youth are seeking is to change the regime in Quebec and not to keep the regime which exists throughout North America.

"The crime of those who are in prison is wanting to get rid of capitalism which has killed hundreds and thousands of people thanks to the international bandits in Washington whose faithful servants are Messrs. Trudeau and Bourassa.

"The basis of the problem is that all these charges (against us) are as foolish as those that Duplessis made against all the officers of the union federation during the Asbestos strikes. The conspiracy which exists is a conspiracy against the economic dictatorship — the tiny minority which governs our economic life and decides to leave unemployed hundreds and thousands of people. That is the root of the problem — it's not a question of new powers, it is a question of changing that government, of getting rid of the economic dictatorship. It's an old story which will be settled some day and sooner than we think."

Appeal for united defense

Montreal, November 11, 1970

The Comité Québécois pour la Défense des Libertés (Quebec Committee for the Defense of Freedom) calls for solidarity actions throughout the country and, where defense committees have already been created, for:

—Repeal of any special law for Quebec.

—Withdrawal of the Canadian army from Quebec territory.

—An end to the repressive offensive of the military and police.

—Immediate release of the political prisoners.

—Awareness that the real problems are social, economic and political.

In addition, we ask:

—United action of all the committees already formed toward a greater offensive against the repressive forces.

—The regroupment of all those in each locality who are struggling for the same ends.

—A meeting within the shortest possible time of representatives of all the committees across the country in order to elaborate joint actions.

Moreover we wish to receive all available information on the other committees already formed, and the actions which they have undertaken or will undertake.

For the Comité Québécois pour la Défense des Libertés. 738-6631, Salle 1273, Pavillon des Sciences Sociales, Université de Montréal, Montréal. Denis Lambert, staff worker.

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